

## Message Text

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ACTION EB-11

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03

INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-03

SS-20 USIA-15 CAB-09 COME-00 DOTE-00 FAA-00 EPA-04

CEQ-02 SCI-06 DRC-01 /133 W  
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R 281720Z MAY 74

FM AMEMBASSY LONDON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0727

INFO AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY PARIS

UNCLAS LONDON 06608

BRUSSELS FOR FAA

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ETRN, SENV, UK, FR.

SUBJ: CONCORDE

1. SPLIT WITHIN UK CABINET CONCERNING FUTURE OF CONCORDE WAS REVEALED BY ANDREW WILSON REPORTING IN OBSERVER MAY 26 ABOUT "OFF-THE-RECORD" BRIEFING GIVEN UK AIR CORRESPONDENTS BY MINISTER OF STATE FOR INDUSTRY, LORD BESWICK, ON MAY 23. WILSON SAID HE FELT COMPELLED TO BREACH NORMAL STRICTURES ON "OFF-THE-RECORD" BRIEFINGS BECAUSE: (A) MEETING HAD BEEN DESCRIBED TO CORRESPONDENTS AS INFORMAL "GET TOGETHER;" (B) "OFF-THE-RECORD" NATURE OF FORMAL BRIEFING NOT REVEALED UNTIL AFTER IT WAS OVER; AND (C) BRIEFING WAS USED TO ATTACK OBSERVER FOR "TOTALLY PREJUDICED" REPORTING ON CONCORDE AND CHANCELLOR OF EXCHEQUER HEALEY FOR HIS OPPOSITION TO CONCORDE.

2. ACCORDING TO WILSON, LORD BESWICK ACCUSED HEALEY OF PREJUDICE AGAINST AIRCRAFT INDUSTRY AND HE SAID  
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HEALEY HAD WANTED TO CANCEL CONCORDE IN HIS BUDGET

SPEECH IN MARCH BUT HAD BEEN PREVENTED FROM DOING SO BECAUSE OF NEED FOR FURTHER CONSULTATION WITH FRENCH. LORD BESWICK THEN WENT ON TO ATTACK OBSERVER FOR PUBLISHING "PHONEY" FIGURES ON COST OF CANCELLING CONCORDE. WHEN IT WAS POINTED OUT THAT NE Y#IDENTICAL FIGURES WERE LATER ISSUED BY INDUSTRY SECRETARY BENN (BESWICK'S SUPERIOR), LORD BESWICK SAID THOSE FIGURES WERE NOW SEEN TO BE INACCURATE.

3. LORD BESWICK APPARENTLY ADMITTED TO CORRESPONDENTS THAT THE ANGLO-FRENCH LEGAL POSITION HAD CHANGED SINCE LAST LABOR GOVERNMENT'S ABORTIVE ATTEMPT TO CANCEL CONCORDE IN 1964. WILSON STATES LORD BESWICK'S AD-MISSION WAS A REFERENCE TO 1968 LETTER FROM THEN FRENCH TRANSPORT MINISTER CHAMANT TO WEDGEWOOD BENN WHO WAS THEN TRADE AND INDUSTRY SECRETARY. WILSON SAYS IN LETTER FRANCE WAIVED UK'S OBLIGATION TO CONTINUE CONCORDE PROGRAM IF NO OVERSEAS ORDERS WERE TRIGGERED BY FIRM ORDERS PLACED BY BRITISH AIRWAYS AND AIR FRANCE.

4. LORD BESWICK INTIMATED TO NEWSMEN THAT NEXT MAJOR STEP WILL BE CABINET DECISION ON PROPOSALS TO BE PUT TO NEW FRENCH GOVERNMENT AND THAT A FINAL DECISION WILL PROBABLY BE ANNOUNCED IN JULY. WILSON, WHO HAS BEEN OUTSPOKEN CONCORDE CRITIC FOR MANY YEARS, ASSERTS THAT, DESPITE FACT LORD BESWICK WAS UNTIL RECENTLY EMPLOYED AS ADVISOR BY MANUFACTURERS OF CONCORDE AND INDUSTRY SECRETARY BENN IS "DESPARATELY CONCERNED" ABOUT FATE OF CONCORDE WORKERS IN HIS BRISTOL CONSTITUENCY, THERE REMAINS A MAJORITY IN CABINET WHO FAVOR CANCELLATION OF CONCORDE, UNILATERALLY IF NECESSARY, AFTER TRADE UNIONS HAVE HAD THEIR SAY AND CONSULTATIONS WITH THE FRENCH HAVE BEEN COMPLETED.

NOTE BY OC/T: #AS RECEIVED.

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## Message Attributes

**Automatic Decaptioning:** X  
**Capture Date:** 01 JAN 1994  
**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Concepts:** AEROSPACE INDUSTRY, CABINET, SUPERSONIC AIRCRAFT, CONCORDE  
**Control Number:** n/a  
**Copy:** SINGLE  
**Draft Date:** 28 MAY 1974  
**Decaption Date:** 01 JAN 1960  
**Decaption Note:**  
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**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
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**Disposition Comment:**  
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**Subject:** CONCORDE  
**TAGS:** ETRN, SENV, UK, FR, (WILSON, ANDREW)  
**To:** STATE  
**Type:** TE  
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